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SUBJECT: CHARGE MEETS WITH NORTH KIVU DELEGATION OF
PARLIAMENTARIANS

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Seven of 48 National Assembly deputies from North Kivu, representing nearly all the province's districts and ethnic groups, were received by the Charge d'Affaires. They raised a number of issues, including current insecurity in North Kivu, the return of FDLR members to Rwanda, and the special problems of women in North Kivu. They also proposed an inter-Rwandan dialogue. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On September 27, Charge d'Affaires Samuel Brock received a group of seven National Assembly deputies from North Kivu, led by Come Sekimonyo, at the Embassy. The deputies requested the meeting to offer their views on the causes of insecurity in eastern Congo in general, and in North Kivu in particular. They thanked the U.S. for having supported the organization of the process that led to election of the president and parliament.

Calling for FDLR departure

¶3. (SBU) The deputies called for integration of dissident General Laurent Nkunda's troops into the FARDC and the return of FDLR members to Rwanda. They stated that FDLR members who participated in the 1994 Rwandan genocide must be prosecuted, but believed that 80 per cent of the FDLR -- although Rwandan nationals -- are not genocidaires. Nkunda's National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) includes members, such as Kakolele and Bosco Ntaganda, who have been sanctioned under UNSCR 1596. The deputies stated emphatically that the people of North Kivu do not deserve their current situation.

Tutsis are not victims of segregation

¶4. (SBU) Contrary to Nkunda's allegations that Tutsis are segregated and marginalized, the deputies noted that Tutsis are present in all national political institutions: there are ten Tutsi generals in the army; the one Tutsi deputy in the National Assembly, Dunia Bakarani, was elected by non-Tutsi voters; and the Tutsis in the Senate, Edouard Mwangachuchu and Moise Nyarugabo, were elected by provincial assemblies (North Kivu and Kinshasa) with non-Tutsi majorities. (Note: The delegation did not include the province's Tutsi deputy. End note.)

The solution: an inter-Rwandan dialogue

¶5. (SBU) To achieve sustainable peace in the region, the deputies stated an inter-Rwandan dialogue, similar to reconciliation dialogues held in DRC, Burundi and South Africa, was necessary. They noted that as long as there is no justice, there will be no reconciliation. They urged that Rwanda contribute to the process, because simply pushing the FDLR further inside the DRC will neither

solve the problem, nor appease the Rwandan government in the long run. Besides, there are also Rwandan Tutsi refugees, such as King Kigeri who is in the U.S., and the former Speaker of the Rwandan parliament, Sebarenzi. They called for a corridor for returning Rwandans home, and requested U.S. assistance for opening diplomatic relations with Rwanda; with the FDLR problem resolved, they averred, Mayi Mayi fighters will be redundant, and Rwanda will not need Nkunda. The deputies also requested greater U.S. aid to the region and a visit to the U.S. Senate to present their proposals for peaceful solutions.

¶6. (SBU) Perhaps the most interesting and compelling statement during the meeting was made by Ms. Sabine Muhima Bintu, the only woman in the delegation and one of two women deputies from North Kivu. She opened her presentation by saying she was making a "cry from the heart" on behalf of the women she represents. With visible emotion she went through a litany of the many forms of suffering and humiliation of her female constituents. She asked the international community for help in repairing women's physical and psychological wounds and in enabling them through training to earn a living for themselves and their children since many of them had been abandoned by their husbands after being raped and, in many cases, injured permanently.

We hear you

¶7. (SBU) The Charge thanked the deputies for their visit and their powerful testimony. He commended them for having taken the initiative in requesting a meeting, because in so doing they were working on behalf of their constituents, the top priority of an elected official. Their presence, he said, was a demonstration of

the young Congolese democracy in action. He also noted that although he and many Americans had learned of the ongoing fighting in North Kivu, understanding the situation there was made easier by hearing about it from persons who knew it first hand. He informed them of the appointment of Timothy Shortley as Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs for conflict resolution, discussing his ongoing efforts to promote peace and development in the Great Lakes region. The Charge also referred to USG assistance in the region, including USAID efforts to promote DDR, good governance, health, education and agriculture.

Deputies to organize a workshop

¶8. (U) The deputies informed the Charge that they are preparing a Conference on Peace and security in eastern DRC, to be convened in October in either Bukavu or Goma. They are holding discussions as to who should participate, what topics should be dealt with, and what results should be expected. They reiterated that it will be a workshop, not an "intercommunity roundtable," because there is no intercommunity struggle in Kivu. They concluded by saying that Kagame should not make the error Habyarimana made by keeping fellow citizens in exile. They called for the return of the FDLR to Rwanda, because most are innocent, pending a trial for the guilty ones.

¶9. (SBU) Comment: We were moved by the efforts of these elected representatives to get their story across: "Our constituents are in great distress and we need your help." Also noteworthy was the fact that despite different political affiliations, they brought with them a unity of purpose: service to their constituents. They were serious and forthright, and the majority were articulate and eloquent in expressing their positions and articulating the suffering of people in North Kivu. The Conference they have proposed may not resolve all problems, but it is a positive step in getting all Congolese stakeholder groups to discuss the problems and contribute to their solution. Finally, they will likely push for a meeting with Tim Shortley during his next visit to the DRC. End comment.

Brock